



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION**

**SURVEY OF VETERANS SATISFACTION WITH THE
COMPENSATION AND PENSION CLAIMS
APPEAL* PROCESS**

Thank you for your help with this important project. This survey contains questions about your recent disagreement with a decision by one of our offices. The information collected will be used to better serve veterans. All responses will be kept confidential.

*In this questionnaire, the word “appeal” is often used. This word applies to the whole process under which you submitted a *notice of disagreement* concerning your claim decision and any later action taken by VA on your behalf. It is important to note that for the purpose of this survey, you did not have to go through the formal “appeal” process at the Board of Veterans Appeals in order to complete this questionnaire.

Please read and answer the following question before going any further.

According to the VA’s records, you filed a *notice of disagreement* with some or all of a disability decision on your claim with one of VBA’s field offices. Do you recall filing this notice? (Mark an “X” in only one box below.)

YES (Continue on with the instructions for filling out the questionnaire.
Then continue to question 1 on the next page and complete the questionnaire.)
NO (STOP. You do not need to complete the rest of this questionnaire, but
please return the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.)

Instructions

This survey should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please follow these instructions:

- Mark an “X” in only one answer box for each question, unless it tells you to “Mark all that apply.”
- Please watch for “SKIP” instructions – they tell you when to skip over a group of questions that you do not need to answer.
- When you are finished, please place the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and put it in the mail.

Flip this page and start with question 1 ➡

Please answer the following questions in reference to the time period PRIOR TO THE TIME YOU FILED YOUR NOTICE OF DISAGREEMENT.

1. Did the letter you received with your claim decision clearly explain all the reasons for the decision?

58% Yes

42% No

2. After you received your decision letter, did you contact VA to discuss it?

64% Yes

36% No

3. How fair was VA's evaluation of your claim?

4% Very fair

10% Somewhat fair

18% Neither fair nor unfair

22% Somewhat unfair

46% Very unfair

4. Was the appeal process clearly explained?

69% Yes

32% No

5. How satisfied were you with VA's decision regarding your claim?

3% Very satisfied

9% Somewhat satisfied

6% Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

18% Somewhat dissatisfied

64% Very dissatisfied

6. Overall, how helpful were VA employees?

22% Very helpful

24% Generally helpful

14% Moderately helpful

19% Somewhat helpful

22% Not at all helpful

7. Overall, did the claims process reflect the courtesy, compassion, and respect due to a veteran of the United States, or their spouse or child?

40% Yes

62% No

8. Regardless of the outcome, how satisfied were you with the way VA handled your claim?

12% Very satisfied

15% Somewhat satisfied

11% Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

21% Somewhat dissatisfied

42% Very dissatisfied

(continue to next column)

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Please answer the following questions in reference to the time period AFTER WHICH YOU FILED YOUR NOTICE OF DISAGREEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME.

9. Did your *notice of disagreement* involve a claim for: (*Mark all that apply.*)

- 43%** Establishment of a service-connected disability rating
- 36%** An increase of a service-connected disability rating
- 7%** Entitlement to non service-connected pension benefits
- 6%** Special monthly pension benefits
- 2%** Death benefits
- 8%** Other (specify) _____

10. Did anyone assist you with your appeal process?

- 84%** Yes (continue to Q11)
- 16%** No (SKIP to Q12)

11. Who helped you with your appeal? (*Mark all that apply.*)

- 19%** VA (local or central office)
- 52%** Veterans Service Organization (VFW, American Legion, DAV, etc.)
- 15%** A state or county veteran service officer
- 4%** A private attorney
- 9%** Other (friend, relative, etc.)

12. What was the decision made on the initial claim for which you filed your current *notice of disagreement*?

- 31%** Partially granted (continue to Q13)
- 69%** Denied (SKIP to Q14)

13. What is the status of your appeal?

- 7%** Granted a full increase in benefits by local VA office (SKIP to Q15)
- 10%** Granted a partial increase in benefits by local VA office (SKIP to Q15)
- 8%** Granted no additional benefit by local VA office (SKIP to Q15)
- 37%** Sent to Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, D.C. for review (SKIP to Q15)
- 10%** You formally reopened the claim and submitted new evidence (SKIP to Q15)
- 27%** No decision made by local VA office as of yet (SKIP to Q18)
- 1%** You withdrew your claim (SKIP to Q18)

14. What is the status of your appeal?

- 3%** Fully granted initial benefit by local VA office
- 1%** Partially granted initial benefit by local VA office
- 14%** Granted no benefit by local VA office
- 46%** Sent to Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, D.C. for review
- 8%** You formally reopened the claim and submitted new evidence
- 24%** No decision made by local VA office as of yet (SKIP to Q18)
- 4%** You withdrew your claim (SKIP to Q18)

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15. Since your submission of the *notice of disagreement* in regard to your initial claim decision, how long did it take to get your first decision from the VA about your appeal (i.e. statement of the case, a partial grant or a full grant)?

0% 1 week or less	14% 3 months
2% 2 weeks	6% 4 months
3% 3 weeks	3% 5 months
10% 4 weeks (1 month)	8% 6 months
7% 5-6 weeks	34% over 6 months
14% 7-8 weeks (2 months)	

16. How reasonable was the length of time it took for VA to get back to you with your first decision about your appeal (i.e. statement of the case, a partial grant or a full grant)?

10% Very reasonable
22% Somewhat reasonable
20% Neither reasonable nor unreasonable
19% Somewhat unreasonable
28% Very unreasonable

17. Was the appeal decision by the VA explained in a way that you could understand?

48% Yes
44% No
8% Did not need explanation

18. Regardless of the outcome, how satisfied are you with the way VA handled your appeal?

8% Very Satisfied
17% Somewhat satisfied
13% Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
20% Somewhat dissatisfied
42% Very dissatisfied

19. Overall, how helpful were VA employees?

24% Very helpful
25% Generally helpful
12% Moderately helpful
17% Somewhat helpful
22% Not at all helpful

20. Overall, did the appeal process at your local VA office reflect the courtesy, compassion, and respect due to a veteran of the United States, or their spouse or child?

51% Yes
49% No

21. Any additional comments concerning how VA could improve the way the appeal process was handled? (*To maintain confidentiality, please do not include your name, address, claim number, or any other identifying information.*)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers are very important to us. Please place the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and return to:

Surveys and Research Staff (245)
Veterans Benefits Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420-0001

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